

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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P R 260726Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2860

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USUN NEW YORK 585

S E C R E T CANBERRA 1810

EXDIS

DEPT PLS PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, MARR, IN, UR, US, AS, CE, XD, UN

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN CALL FOR US/SOVIET MUTUAL RESTRAINT IN  
INDIAN OCEAN

REF: A) STATE 058869 B) MOSCOW 4207 C) CANBERRA 1729

1. SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATION MARCH 25, RENOUF PROVIDED ME WITH BACKGROUND ON AUSTRALIAN PRESENTATION TO US AND USSR ON MUTUAL RESTRAINT IN INDIAN OCEAN. RENOUF STATED IDEA HAD BEEN HIS AND THERE HAD NEVER BEEN ANY SUGGESTION THAT INDIA AND AUSTRALIA SHOULD ACT JOINTLY IN THIS MATTER. PURPOSE OF RENOUF'S IDEA WAS TO BALANCE PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S PUBLIC IMAGE AS "IDEALIST" WITH "FACTS OF LIFE" RELATING TO SITUATION IN INDIAN OCEAN. AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS MAR 26 CARRY STRAIGHT STORIES GIVING ACCURATE TEXT OF AUSTRALIAN PRESENTATION AND NOTING THAT BOTH US AND USSR OFFICIALS RESPONDED THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS ARE AWARE OF AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE AS EXPRESSED IN PRESENTATION. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING CONVERSATION WITH ALAN RENOUF, SECRETARY OF DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MAR 25, I RAISED SUBJECT OF RUMORED AUSTRALIAN-INDIAN INITIATIVE CALLING FOR MUTUAL RESTRAINT IN

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MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN INDIAN OCEAN. UNFORTUNATELY, REFS A AND

B HAD NOT YET BEEN DELIVERED IN CANBERRA AND I WAS UNAWARE OF AUSTRALIAN INITIATIVES ON MAR 22 AND 23 IN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW RESPECTIVELY.

3. IN DISCUSSING SUBJECT, RENOUF SAID IDEA OF INITIATIVE HAD COME FROM HIM WHEN HE WAS AT AIRPORT TO FAREWELL VISITING INDIAN DELEGATION WHICH HAD BEEN IN CANBERRA FOR PERIODIC AUSTRALIAN-INDIAN TALKS ON FOREIGN POLICY. THIS CONFERENCE CONCLUDED MARCH 1, AND RENOUF SAID HE HAD SUGGESTED TO DEPARTING INDIAN OFFICIALS THAT AUSTRALIA AND INDIA COULD PERHAPS SEPARATELY, "YOU WITH YOUR 'ALLY' THE SOVIET UNION, AND WE WITH OUR 'ALLY' THE UNITED STATES," SUGGEST THAT THE TWO SUPER POWERS SHOULD GET TOGETHER TO AGREE TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN MILITARY BUILDUP IN INDIAN OCEAN. ACCORDING TO RENOUF, INDIANS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN IDEA WITH INDICATION THEY WOULD DISCUSS IT WITHIN INDIAN GOVERNMENT. SUBSEQUENTLY, RENOUF SAID NEWS OF POSSIBLE INITIATIVE WAS LEAKED IN NEW DELHI, HE BELIEVES, BY AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR BRUCE GRANT. RENOUF EMPHASIZED THAT THERE WAS NEVER ANY SUGGESTION THAT INDIA AND AUSTRALIA SHOULD MAKE JOINT APPROACH TO US AND USSR ON THIS SUBJECT.

4. IN EXPLAINING MOTIVATION FOR MAKING SUGGESTION RENOUF STATED HE WAS INTERESTED IN WHITLAM'S PUBLIC IMAGE AND WISHED TO SHOW HIM AS BEING MORE REALISTIC IN LIGHT OF THE SEVERAL IDEALISTIC CONCEPTS WHITLAM HAS PUBLICLY ESPOUSED DURING HIS TERM AS PRIME MINISTER. RENOUF SAID IT WAS ALL WELL AND GOOD TO TALK ABOUT ZONES OF PEACE BUT THAT THE FACTS OF THE MATTER ALSO HAD TO BE ADDRESSED PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE INDIAN OCEAN. RENOUF SAID THAT AUSTRALIAN ESPOUSAL OF US-USSR TALKS ON LOWERING THE LEVEL OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WERE INTENDED IN NO WAY TO BE "ANTI-AMERICAN."

5. RENOUF DID NOT MENTION THE FACT THAT AUSTRALIAN EMBASSIES IN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO REQUEST US-USSR DISCUSSION OF MUTUAL RESTRAINT IN INDIAN OCEAN AS REPORTED REFS A AND B. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER HE WAS FULLY INFORMED ABOUT THESE INSTRUCTIONS, HAVING JUST RETURNED FROM FIVE DAYS AT THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM IN RAROTONGA. HE MAY HAVE KNOWN THAT GOA HAD TAKEN THE INITIATIVE OR WAS PLANNING TO DO SO, BUT WAS UNAWARE THAT THE APPROACHES HAD BEEN MADE WHEN I TALKED WITH HIM. IN ANY  
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CASE, THE FOREGOING PROVIDES ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON AUSTRALIAN MOTIVATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.

6. RENOUF ALSO MENTIONED THE FACT THAT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WAS PRESSING FOR A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN OF THE UN. RENOUF STATED FLATLY THAT GOA WAS OPPOSED TO CALLING SPECIAL MEETING AND HAD SO INFORMED THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT. SINCE THE COMMITTEE, HOWEVER, INVOLVED A NUMBER OF

OTHER STATES, RENOUF INDICATED GOA MIGHT IN THE END HAVE TO AGREE TO THIS MEETING ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD BE "DRAGGED ALONG" BY THE OTHER GOVERNMENTS. RENOUF SAW IN THE CALLING FOR A SPECIAL MEETING THE POSSIBILITY THE US WOULD BE CRITICIZED FOR ITS RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT ON DIEGO GARCIA AND STATED THAT THE GOA WANTED NO PART OF THIS ONE-SIDED CRITICISM OF THE US.

7. SEVERAL AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS CARRIED ON MAR 26 FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF PRESENTATIONS MADE BY AUSTRALIAN EMBASSIES IN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW. THESE ACCOUNTS STRESS TIMING OF PRESENTATION WAS KEYED TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT SCHEDULED FOR MAR 24. STORIES ALSO STATE APPROACH IN WASHINGTON WAS MADE TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL AND IN MOSCOW TO UNNAMED FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL BY AUSTRALIAN CHARGE, SINCE AMBASSADOR PLIMSOLL HAS NOT YET PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS. ONLY ONE NEWSPAPER, CANBERRA TIMES, HEADLINED AUSTRALIAN PRESENTATION AS "PROTEST" AND STORY IN THIS PAPER ITSELF DOES NOT SUPPORT SUCH A DESCRIPTION. OTHER NEWSPAPERS STATE AUSTRALIAN PRESENTATION TO BE A "PLEA" FOR SUPER POWERS TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT.

8. SINCE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK AND PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM WILL NOT GIVE PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH HE NORMALLY GIVES IF HE IS IN CANBERRA ON TUESDAY, PRESS INQUIRIES ON SUBJECT WILL HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED TO PRIME MINISTER ELSEWHERE IN AUSTRALIA, IF AT ALL. IT CAN BE EXPECTED AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS WILL EDITORIALIZE ON THIS SUBJECT DURING NEXT FEW DAYS AND EMBASSY WILL REPORT REACTION.

GREEN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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## Message Attributes

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